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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

October 26, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL
SECURITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Soviet/GDR Inspection of Allied Traffic Into Berlin

Transmitted herewith is a paper on the above subject which was agreed to by the Berlin-NATO Subcommittee at its meeting of October 25.

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Chairman,
Ber-NATO Subcommittee

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WHEN WITH LITERATURES

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NSC/ExCom/Sub-Com BER-NATO #1

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SOVIET/GDR INSPECTION OF ALLIED TRAFFIC
INTO BERLIN

1. PROBLEM:

Suppose the Soviets demanded they be allowed to examine all Allied cargo entering Berlin, as a quarantine against offensive weapons there. Suppose further that they suggested this might be the extent of their reply to our quarantine of Cuba. What should the US position be?

2. BACKGROUND:

a. Allied air traffic entering Berlin has never been subjected to any form of Soviet examination.

b. Cargo being moved by autobahn or rail aboard properly documented Allied vehicles has never been subjected to Soviet examination.

c. The Soviets have repeatedly tried over the years to extend their control over Allied traffic to Berlin, but Allied insistence on the two points above has been adamant.

d. The Allies have brought neither nuclear weapons nor missiles (bazookas and recoilless rifles are not regarded as missiles, nor are they remotely comparable to MRBMs) into Berlin.

3. DISCUSSION:

To concede to the Soviets a right on which we have continuously and strenuously insisted during nearly two decades would constitute a marked softening of the Allied position concerning Berlin. Implicit in the right to examine cargo, the Soviets would argue, is the right to determine what sort of cargo may enter. Soviet efforts to assert such rights would infringe upon vital Allied interests regarding the presence and security of Allied forces in Berlin.

The Berlin population would be seriously upset if the Allies were to allow examination of land cargoes, but they would be deprived of the foundation of their sense of freedom if the Soviets were permitted to examine Allied air traffic. It is the West Berliner's ability to fly in and out of West Berlin completely free of any Soviet or GDR inspection that sustains him psychologically.

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Turning to the relationship with the Cuba quarantine, it would be a good thing indeed to know that the Soviets would have no other reaction than a demand to inspect Berlin traffic. But how could one count on it? What justification would there be for believing, and for assuring Allied populations and the West Berliners, that this represented the final slice of salami rather than one more slice among many?

If the Soviets were allowed to inspect the cargoes, they could later turn this "right" over to the GDR, thus extending in a major way the de facto sovereignty of the GDR.

The quadripartite Allies have quite recently reconfirmed the long-standing Allied position on refusing Soviet examination of cargo.

As the US has forcefully and publicly proclaimed, no logical connection exists between a free West Berlin whose people want Allied troops on hand and a Cuba whose subjugated people want Soviet forces and weapons to leave. To make such a trade-off as is suggested would corrupt this main element of the US political case.

4. CONCLUSION:

a. It would be against the security interests of the US and its Allies to permit such inspection.

b. Since we would not only suffer Soviet intrusion onto our long-standing rights in Berlin, but also lack assurance that intrusion would go no further, such a demand would be unacceptable.